

Week Ending Friday, December 28, 2001

Remarks at the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay Ceremony

December 22, 2001

The President. Please be seated. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. It's the kind of morning we expect when we're honoring the winter Olympics. This flame stands for the skill and dedication of friendly competition. I'm honored to take part in the 2002 Olympic torch relay, and I'm really proud to welcome the Olympic spirit to America this winter.

I want to thank Mitt Romney for coming. Mitt, it's great to see you again. I know Utah is well represented by the chairman, Congressman Jim Hansen. Thank you both for being here.

I want to welcome all the members of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee and members of the United States Olympic Committee for being here, as well. These men and women have worked tirelessly and long, long, long hours to make sure that our country is well represented when the world starts focusing on us yet again in February of this year. I'm really proud of the work you've done. You've brought a lot of honor to America, and for that, Americans are grateful.

The 2002 Olympic games will officially begin when this torch reaches its destination in Salt Lake City. Its 13,500-mile journey will bring it through 46 States, carried by some 11,500 torchbearers. Each torchbearer's story is a lesson in citizenship and courage and compassion.

Two torchrunners with us today were deeply affected by the attacks of September the 11th. Liz Howell lost her husband, Brady, in the attack on the Pentagon. Brady was fulfilling a lifelong dream by serving his country at the Pentagon. Liz left her native Utah to help Brady live that dream. Her participation in the torch relay represents the strength shown by so many families after September

the 11th. And Liz, our Nation prays with you during this holiday season. We pray for peace and comfort for you and your family.

Our other participant is a student, Eric Jones, who goes to George Washington University just a few blocks from the White House and the Pentagon. On September the 11th, Eric left the campus and headed to the Pentagon. He spent 4 days helping with the rescue efforts, and then he traveled to New York to do the same.

Before he left the Pentagon, Eric helped carry out a symbol of American pride, the Marine Corps flag. Last week that flag flew high above the Earth on the space shuttle *Endeavor*. On behalf of all Americans, I thank these two torchbearers for their courage and for their compassion, for representing the best of our great country.

I thank everyone who has worked so hard to make the Salt Lake City and the games a memorable site. I wish all our athletes God-speed. I continue to pray the Lord's blessings for safety and security on our great land during the holiday season.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer, Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 winter Olympic games.

The President's Radio Address

December 22, 2001

Good morning. This week before Christmas was a busy one in Washington, DC. Members of Congress have returned home with many achievements to show for their work. Congress passed, and I will soon sign, the most important education reforms in a generation. We have taken strong action to support our military, protect our homeland, and make our airways more secure. The year

2001 also saw the largest tax relief in two decades.

These achievements bring credit to the Congress, and I'm grateful for their work. I'm disappointed, however, that the Senate was not able to pass legislation to get our economy growing again and to help workers who have lost their jobs. I'm hopeful that the positive spirit of bipartisan accomplishment that guided much of this year's success will prevail when Congress returns early next year.

Our thoughts in these coming days, however, do not center on public policy. Millions of Americans will be celebrating Christmas, marking an ancient birth of an eternal promise of peace on Earth and good will to men. This Christmas comes just months after a great national loss. We find ourselves appreciating more than ever the things that matter most: our families, our friends, and our faith. We count our blessings, and we remember all those who feel loss, separation, and need.

For the families that lost a loved one on September the 11th or in the fighting in Afghanistan, this will be the first Christmas without a husband or a wife or a father or a mother or son or daughter. Our Nation shares their grief.

Many thousands of our fighting men and women will spend Christmas far from home, accepting hardship and danger to protect us all. We are grateful to every military family for the sacrifice they are making for America. We owe them much.

Our Nation is also thankful for the people of every faith, in every community, who make a special effort this time of year to help neighbors in need. So many good-hearted Americans are giving time or money to make sure that there's a hot meal for homeless people, a Christmas present for disadvantaged children, food for the hungry in foreign lands, or just a visit to bring comfort to someone who is lonely or sick.

The year now ending saw a few acts of terrible evil. It also saw many more acts of courage and kindness and love. And these reflect the great hope of Christmas: A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.

Laura and I wish a very joyous holiday to all Americans. May the peace and good will

of the season fill every heart and warm every home.

Thank you for listening, and Merry Christmas.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:00 a.m. on December 21 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation

December 25, 2001

Good morning, and Merry Christmas. During this time of conflict and challenge, Christmas is a day on which we celebrate hope and joy, when our thoughts turn to justice and compassion and to a Prince of Peace born long ago. This is a day on which we give thanks for the wonder of God's love, for the blessings we have received, and for the families we love. And this year all of these things seem particularly important.

Charles Dickens wrote that Christmas is a time when abundance rejoices and want is keenly felt. This Christmas finds many facing hurt and loss, especially the families of terror victims and of our young men killed in battle. America grieves with you, and we hope you'll especially find the comfort and hope of Christmas.

Laura and I send our good wishes to all the families in America that have come together in celebration. We're especially grateful to all the men and women of our military, many of whom are today separated from their loved ones because they're serving our country.

Even in this time of war, we pray for peace on Earth and good will toward men, and we continue to ask God's blessings on the United States.

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

NOTE: The radio greeting was recorded at 10:04 a.m. on December 21 in the Cabinet Room for later broadcast, and the transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21 but was embargoed for release until December 25.